

## The Power of Time Management: Who's got the monkey? / Energy Management

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The purpose of my Leadership Seminar was to bring attention to one potential time sink; people bringing you issues they could often solve themselves.

My motivation for this topic was twofold. First, I have been the monkey carrying employee and was explicitly told by my supervisor, "Not my monkey, not my problem." At first I was taken aback and thought my supervisor simply didn't care. As I became a supervisor myself, I realized what my supervisor was truly trying to communicate: "You are capable of solving your own problems." Second, as a peer, I tend to help my co-workers solve their problems. In doing so, I found I was enabling them and setting expectations that I will solve all their problems.

I provided two readings and one video as reference to the topic. I asked the class to separate into smaller groups for 10 minutes and discuss real world situations where they needlessly took someone else's monkey. Each group shared their best story.

We then role played different scenarios and discussed how we could have declined to take the monkey.

Scenarios ranged from home life examples to work examples. We discussed how to deal with the impromptu hallway meeting where you found you collected monkeys. A strategy suggested was to ask the other person to follow up by summarizing the meeting in an e mail or schedule a meeting to follow up. For the personal example, we discussed sharing responsibilities and clearly defining what each partner will take on.

We concluded with a quick discussion on energy management and tackling certain tasks when you have energy for the task. For instance, I have energy first thing in the morning to tackle admin responsibilities such as e mail and on line training. I quickly lose the ability to focus on those activities in the afternoon and can visit with employees better. It was quickly pointed out I should also be mindful of my employees energy levels and when they would want to receive me.

Overall, I feel it is very valuable to be mindful of what monkeys you allow yourself to take on. By encouraging the people we work with to solve their own problems, we create a feeling of empowerment and accomplishment. Employees will feel they can take on new challenges and be more productive. This in turn frees up your time to take on the tasks and challenges you must see to.

Prerequisites:

Article: [Who's Got the Monkey \(HBR\)](#)

Video: How to Avoid Monkeys on Your Desk:

<https://www.entreleadership.com/videos/how-to-avoid-monkeys-on-your-desk>

Extra Credit:

[Energy Management](#)